E.12.70

THE MYSTERY OF THE Christian Faith AND OF THE *Blessed TRINITY* VINDICATED AND THE *Divinity of Christ* PROVED.

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.

In Three SERMONS.

Preach'd at *Westminster-Abbey* upon *Trinity-Sunday*, *June* the 7th, and *September* 21. 1696.

By the Late Reverend
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In the Press before his Death, and by himself ordered to be Published.

LONDON,
Printed for *Richard Cumberland* at the *Angel* in St. *Pauls Church-Yard*. 1697.

1307:90

THE MYSTERY OF THE Chriſtian Faith AND OF THE *Bleſſed TRINITY* VINDICATED.

SERMON I.

1 TIM. iii. 9.

Holding the Myſtery of the Faith in a pure Conſcience.

THIS Advice which is here given to *Deacons*, does almoſt equally concern all *Chriſtians*; for tho' there are ſome Duties peculiar to the

Miniſters of Religion, relating to their *Office*, yet the common Duties of Chriſtianity are bound upon *Them* and the *People* with equal tyes and obligations. So that every Chriſtian is under the ſame engagements to be a Good Man, to live as Vertuouſly and Religiouſly, and to perform all the Duties of our common Chriſtian Religion, as either a Presbyter or a Deacon, both which, ſome think, are meant here; Faith and a Good Conſcience are to be kept or held by All, and he is not a Chriſtian who lets go, or makes Shipwrack of either.

The Chriſtian Faith though it be a Myſtery, yet is not as the Heathen Myſteries, to be a Secret kept up and concealed from the Vulgar, and known only to the Prieſts, to the *Myſtæ* and *Adepti*, by a ſort of *Diſciplinâ Arcani*, but is by the Goſpel Revelation diſcovered and communicated to All: All Catechumens are to be Taught and Inſtructed in it, All who are Baptized are to profeſs it, and all the *Fideles* are to underſtand and to keep it, as the Faith

Faith once delivered to them by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, and by the Church and Holy Scriptures. The believing Chriſt to be the Meſſiah, and *Sent* of God, is not the only Fundamental Article of Chriſtianity as ſome would have it, for if it were, all the Hereticks in the Apoſtolick and after Ages had come up to it, againſt whom notwithſtanding St. *John* in his Epiſtles, and other Canonic Writers ſpeak ſo much as well as St. *Clement*, *Polycarp*, *Ignatius* and the earlieſt Writers who renounced both the Faith and the Communion of thoſe Heretics, notwithſtanding, they owned Chriſt to be the Meſſiah; ſo that this was not a ſufficient Faith for a Chriſtian, as ſuch.

But it may be asked, Are ordinary Chriſtians then to believe the Myſterious, and Abſtruſe Doctrines of Chriſtianity? Such as the Trinity, the Divinity and Incarnation of Chriſt, and the like, which are ſo difficult, and unintelligible that the moſt Learned cannot underſtand them or agree about them; are theſe to be accounted Fun-

damental and Eſſential Articles of Faith neceſſary to be believed by the meaneſt and moſt ordinary Capacities, which are ſo puzzling and ſo intricate to the higheſt?

I Anſwer, Whatever is Eſſential and Fundamental to Chriſtianity, and as ſuch is plainly Reveal'd by God, upon which the Peculiar Faith, Hope and Worſhip of it is built, however incomprehenſible and Myſterious it is, which ſhall be conſidered immediately, is to be believed by every Chriſtian; as, that God ſent his only Son into the World, and that we are Redeemed by him, and that we are to place our Hopes, Truſt and Confidence in him for Salvation, and that we are to Worſhip him, and Pray to him, and to Honour him, even as we Honour the Father. This which is the Peculiar Scheme and Character of Chriſtianity, and neceſſarily ſuppoſes Chriſts Divinity, and that he is not a Creature; and alſo the Divinity of the Holy Ghoſt the Comforter and the Sanctifier, and ſo conſequently a Divine Trinity, this

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is as neceſſary to be believed by every one as Chriſtianity, for it is the very make and peculiar œconomy of Chriſtianity, as 'tis diſtinct from Natural Religion. This Faith with a Good Life, or a Life anſwerable to the Rules and Precepts of the Goſpel is neceſſary to make and conſtitute a good Chriſtian. To ask whether a good Life will not ſave a Man without this Faith, is to be anſwered with the ſame queſtion, or one much like it, Whether ſuch a good Life will ſave a Man without believing Chriſtianity? They are both neceſſary to a Chriſtian, who is thus to hold the Myſtery of the Faith in a pure Conſcience.

I ſhall from the words Conſider theſe two General Things.

I. *Why the Chriſtian Faith is call'd a Myſtery?*

II. *How we are to hold it in a pure Conſcience?*

I. *Why the Christian Faith is call'd a Mystery?* Which it is upon Three Accounts.

1. As it was not knowable by Natural Reason without an Express and Immediate Divine Revelation.

2. As it was very obscurely and imperfectly Revealed before the Gospel, and the coming of Christ.

3. As it is Incomprehensible to our Reason and what we cannot fully conceive and Apprehend even after it is clearly Revealed.

1. *As it is not knowable by Natural Reason without an Express and Immediate Divine Revelation.* For thus that God should have a Son, an Eternal, only begotten Son, of the same Nature and Likeness with himself, and that he should send this his Son into the World to become a Man, to take on him our Nature, and be made Flesh, that so he might dye for us, and be a Sacrifice for our Sins, and Save and Redeem Mankind according to this Mysterious Method

Method, Oeconomy and Diſpenſation of the Goſpel, this is what Reaſon could never have found out, nor any thing but the Infinite Wiſdom, and no leſs Infinite Goodneſs of God have contrived.

That there is a God, an Inviſible Maker of the World, a Firſt Cauſe of All Things, this Reaſon and the Light o Nature teaches us, and *the inviſible things of him from the Creation are plainly ſeen by the things he hath made, even his Eternal Power and Godhead.* His Power and Wiſdom and Goodneſs are ſufficiently manifeſt to our Thoughts and Reaſon by the admirable Structure and the commodious and beautiful and orderly contrivance of the World and all the things that are in it, and we can know moſt of his Attributes and Eſſential Perfections from Reaſon and the plain deductions and conſequences of it, but that this Infinite and Almighty and All-ſufficient God, who had all poſſible perfections in himſelf, and all Perfections ſufficient to his

own Happineſs and Self-enjoyment, and to the Needs and Neceſſities of his Creatures, and to all the Purpoſes of Creation and Providence, that he ſhould beget a Son, another Divine Perſon and Being like himſelf, and communicate the ſame Divine Nature and Godhead to him that belong'd to himſelf, this which the Scripture Revelation acquaints us with, is ſo far from being known by Reaſon, that That ſtaggers at it, and asks two bold queſtions about it, How this can be? And to what purpoſe it is? And *Mahomet* in his *Alcoran* * offers ſeveral reaſons againſt it, among which this is one, *That God and his Son would make two Gods, and that they muſt worſhip only one God.*

* *Azoarâ* 12. *cap. Helmon. in Alcoran. Nec Chriſtum Deum adorare confeſſus eſt (ſc.* Mahomet. *) ne forte duos Deos adorare deprehenderetur.* Cantacuzen. *in* Mahomet. *Orat.* 3.

Theſe Reaſons, I think may be fairly anſwered, but Reaſon it ſelf could not have known or collected this either from the Divine fecundity, or from

from any Natural Perfection or Property of God knowable by the Light of Nature, 'tis only Revelation acquaints us with it, and lets us at the ſame time ſee the admirable ends and uſes and purpoſes of this, if not for the deſigns of Creation and Providence, yet for the Redemption of the World by this Son of God, which is a work as great and as Divine if not more ſo than the other two.

'Tis the peculiar Character, Frame and Scheme of Chriſtianity to reveal this Myſtery fully to us, this adorable Myſtery of Divine Love and Wiſdom, God's Saving Loſt and undone Mankind by his Son Jeſus Chriſt; Reaſon could not have diſcovered this, nor can it now penetrate into all the deep Counſels of the Divine Govenment, and hidden Reaſons of the Divine Wiſdom which made this either abſolutely neceſſary, or to be ſure the moſt fit and convenient Method to Save and Redeem Mankind.

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This is ſuch a Myſtery of State, ſuch a Secret of the Heavenly and Divine Policy and Management, that whether God could have Effected and Accompliſhed this any other way is unknown to us, and our Reaſon muſt cry out upon the Thoughts of it, *O the Depth of the Riches both of the Wiſdom and Knowledge of God, how unſearchable are his Judgments, and his ways paſt finding out.*

Rom. 11. 33.

Further, The Chriſtian Revelation diſcovers to us another Divine Perſon beſides the Son, to wit, the Holy Ghoſt, who proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and who was ſent by them in a Viſible and extraordinary manner, and was to be the Comforter and Paraclete, as Chriſt the Redeemer and Saviour; and was to Sanctifie, and Fit, and Qualifie all Chriſtians for that Salvation which Chriſt had Purchaſed and Obtained for them, without whom Chriſtianity could not have been ſpred and eſtabliſhed

bliſhed in the World, nor in the Hearts of Men, and who was therefore to bear a Peculiar and Diſtinct part and Office in the Accompliſhing the great work of our Redemption, which was to be Performed by the Fathers ſending his Son, and both ſending the Holy Ghoſt, to Perfect and Effect this Great Thing; and This is the Conſtitution, the Frame, the Faith of Chriſtianity, as a Religion diſtinct from Natural, and which is ſuch a Myſtery as could not have been found out by Natural Light and Reaſon without an immediate Divine Revelation, for it was not any Natural Property of the Divine Nature, ſo far as we know, to have a Son and a Holy Spirit, nor did the Purpoſes of Creation and Providence require this, and therefore the Deiſts and others think more than one Divine Perſon, and one Infinite Being Unneceſſary; and as far as Reaſon alone goes, neither the Truth nor the Neceſſity of more would appear, but Revelation, and eſpecially the Chriſtian acquaints us with God's having a Son,

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and a Holy Spirit, distinct Persons from himself; the one Begotten of him and so his only Son, the other proceeding from him and the Son both, and these two still in the Father, naturally and inseparably united to him as to the Fountain of their Being. One with him in the same Divine Nature and Essence, and All Three together Accomplishing, Effecting and Perfecting the Redemption of Mankind and bearing distinct parts in that Great and Blessed Work.

2. *As Reason could not have known or found out any thing of this, so the Revelation of it was at first very Obscure and Imperfect*; there being only some smaller Glimpses, and lesser manifestations of it, and those covered with Types and shadows, and Prophetic Symbols, through which the Fathers saw as through a Glass darkly, and beheld the Promises of the *Messiah* yet afar off, so that the *Jewish* Law and Dispensation, though it wholly pointed at this thing, and

Christ

Chriſt was the end of it, yet was but a *Shadow of theſe good things to come*, and *Moſes had a vail over his face, by which the Children of Iſrael* could not ſee to the end of their own Typical Inſtitution, *till the vail was taken away in Chriſt.* And *the Myſtery which was kept ſecret ſince the World began* a, *which had been hid from Ages and Generations* b, *and which in other Ages was not made known unto the Sons of Men* c, was by the Goſpel *revealed* and *manifeſt* and *made known* to all men, to the Gentiles as well as to the *Jews* d.

a 2 *Cor.* 3. 14.

b *Rom.* 16. 25.

c *Col.* 1. 26.

d *Eph.* 3. 5.

Adam immediately after his Fall had this Myſtery of Gods ſending the *Meſſiah* into the World for the Salvation of Mankind promiſed and revealed to him in thoſe words, *The Seed of the Woman ſhall break the Serpents head*, Gen. 3. 15. And no doubt he tranſmitted this great and comfortable Tradition to all his Poſterity, and

and there ſeem to be the broken remains and Characters of it in ſome parts of the Religion of all Mankind, eſpecially in the general if not Univerſal Cuſtom of Sacrifices, and the ſecret *Cabala* and myſterious deſign ſeems to run through the Gentile Theology, which was a corruption of the Patriarchal Religion, from whence ſome Marks and Footſteps of this Original Myſterious Tradition were preſerved and continued among the Gentiles, as appears in the Propheſies of *Balaam* of Old, and the *Sybils* afterwards, and in the Notion of a Trinity among the *Platoniſts* and others, which outdoes any thing to be found about that matter in any *Jewiſh* Writer, and muſt come from ſome Antient *Cabala*, and Traditionary Account of it.

How far the *Jews* had a knowledge and belief of it, we want their Writings to acquaint us, though in ſome of thoſe we have, there are remarkable intimations of it, as in the *Caldee* Paraphraſe the *Meſſiah* is often called

called the *Mamra Jehovæ*, the Word of God, the Λογος, as St. *John* calls him, and there, and in the *Hieruſalem Targum*, he is repreſented as a ſubſtantial Word, and as a Divine Perſon; and ſeveral of their Rabbies interpret that of 110 *Pſalm*, *The Lord ſaid unto my Lord*, of the *Meſſiah*; and ſo that of *Jeremy* 23. where he is called the Lord, or *Jehovah* our Righteouſneſs; and they often ſpeak of their Emanations from the *Kedem*, or Eſſence of the Antient of days; and in their Prayers and Liturgies, particularly in a Collect uſed at the Feaſt of *Tabernacles*, God is invoked as Sanctified with three Sanctifications; and in a Famous Book among them, called *The Gate of Righteouſneſs*, this Sanctification is called a Myſtery, whereby, they ſay, is meant the Proceſſion of the Emanations from the *Corona*, which is the Myſtery in *Iſa.* 6. 3. *Holy, Holy, Holy*. *Galatinus*, and *Voiſin*, and other *Rabbinical* Writers, produce many ſuch Inſtances out of the *Jewiſh* Writers to this purpoſe, notwithſtanding which I doubt the Notion

Notion of the *Meſſiah* as a Divine Perſon, and as the Son of God in our Senſe, was loſt among all the latter *Jews*, who looked upon him only as a Temporal Prince, and an Earthly Monarch; and though in many places of the Old Teſtament, and eſpecially in the Book of *Pſalms*, there are ſeveral Proofs and Authorities for the belief of a Trinity, and the *Meſſiah*'s being a Divine Perſon, yet there is nothing in their Revelation that has any Evidence of it equal to that of the Goſpel, and therefore notwithſtanding all imperfect and obſcure Revelations of it before, it is called there *a Myſtery, which hath been hid from Ages and Generatiins, but is now made manifeſt*, Coloſ. 1. 26. *Which was kept ſecret ſince the World began, but now is made manifeſt*, *Rom.* 16. 26. *Which in other Ages was not made known unto the Sons of men, as it is now revealed unto us*, *Eph.* 3. 6. Our *Socinian* Adverſaries will allow the Chriſtian Faith to be a Myſtery upon theſe two Accounts I have mention'd. And I muſt confeſs the

the word Myſtery is generally uſed in Scripture in theſe Sences; but it is not ſo much the Word as the Thing we are to Conſider, namely, whether there be any Truths in Religion Incomprehenſible to our Reaſon? And this is the Third *Reaſon* why I would have the Chriſtian Faith called a Myſtery which they ſo much Expoſe and *Ridicule*, and which I ſhall endeavour to Defend as it contains,

3. *Something Incomprehenſible and Unconceivable, and Unaccountable to our Reaſon and Underſtanding, even after it is the moſt fully and clearly revealed by the Goſpel.* By which I do not mean that we have no Idæa, Conception or Knowledge at all of what we do believe concerning it, for then it would be juſt ſuch a Myſtery as it is to thoſe who know nothing at all of it, a Thing perfectly unknown, a Nullity, a Non-Entity, which is no manner of Object of our Faith, and concerning which we can neither affirm or deny any things nor have any Perſwaſion or Diſſwaſion about it. The Trinity would

then be only an empty word, or ſound without any meaning, or ſignification, like the word *mm* among the unlearned *Greek* Scribes, mention'd by St. *Hierome*, put for the *Hebrew* יהוה, but we know very well what is meant by thoſe words of Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, or Spirit, though to connect, and unite thoſe *Idea*'s, and to make ſuch Propoſitions out of thoſe Terms as are agreeable to Faith may be a difficulty.

Epiſt. 136.

2. Yet neither are we ſo to joyn, and unite thoſe *Idea*'s nor to make any ſuch Propoſitions out of thoſe Terms, as ſhall be inconſiſtent with themſelves, and deſtroy, and contradict one another, as to ſay that they are One, and that they are Three in the ſame reſpect, the ſame ſenſe, and conſideration. The doing this, or endeavouring to do it, has wretchedly perplext our Chriſtian Faith, and made it be called by its Enemies, a Myſtery of Nonſenſe, Abſurdity and Contradiction, and expoſed it as ſuch to our Heretical Adverſaries; whereas had we gone no farther then Scrip-

Scripture, the only Rule of our Faith in this matter, and held with that, that *to us there is One God the Father, One God, and Father of all, who is above all*, and had we *known him the onely true God*; as Christ calls him, not exclusively, but eminently, and by way of Excellency, and Prerogative, by which the Name and Title of God is peculiarly prædicated of God the Father in Scripture, as *Calvin* ingenuously delivers it, to use his own words, *Ingenue tradimus τὸ ὄνομα Dei nomen Patri proprie ascribi*: And another Protestant Divine his Follower, *Patrem sic vocari (Unum & solum Deum) κατ' ἐξοχὴν quia totius est Deitatis fons*; which is the great Reason given by the Fathers of the Divine Unity, and in this the * Papists agree with them. Had we considered this plain Scriptural account, and observation that one

1 Cor. 8. 6. Eph. 4. 6. John 17. 3.

Calvin in Protheses Valent. Gent.

Zanchius de tribus Elohim, L. 5. C. 5.

* *Peculiariter & κατ' ἐξοχὴν tributur Patri nomen Dei.* Ravanell. Bibl. v. Deus & Persona.

God is ſpoken, and prædicated of the Father, and meant of him, when it is ſaid both in the Old Teſtament, and the New. *The Lord thy God is One God, and there is none other but he,* or *beſides him*; we had not given occaſion for that objection of our Adverſaries, againſt our Faith, of its implying a Contradiction, or of its ſetting up more Gods than one. The One God whom we Pray to in the Lord's Prayer, and in other Chriſtian Offices, and Addreſſes, whom we profeſs to believe in, in our Creed, and whom the Scripture calls ſo, is God the Father Almighty; and he hath an onely begotten Son, of the ſame Nature and Eſſence with himſelf, who is the *brightneſs of his Glory, and the expreſs Image of his Perſon*; and there is alſo an Holy Spirit proceeding from both, and ſent by both, who hath the Characters, and Attributes of Divinity plainly aſcribed to him, and who is joyned with the Father, and the Son in the Office of Chriſtian Baptiſm, and in the Form of Chriſtian Bleſſing, and againſt whom

Deut. 6. 4. *Mark* 12. 32.

whom the moſt high, and unpardonable Sin may be committed. This is our Chriſtian Faith which as it lies in the Scripture has no contradiction in it, that I know of, nor do the ſeveral terms whereof it conſiſts deſtroy, or oppoſe one another.

Theſe three are one, is the only thing in Scripture, or in our Faith that ſounds as a Contradiction, and in one, and the ſame ſenſe it muſt be owned ſuch a downright contradiction, that it cannot be true, ſome would therefore ſuſpect, and throw out that paſſage, and are very willing to find ſome Copies of the Bible without it, it being the only place of Scripture that ſayes this, but our Saviour ſayes, *He, and his Father are one, John* 10. 30. and three may be one as well as two. We muſt therefore conſider the true ſenſe, and meaning of the words, which was not to teach us a new way of numbring, or to deſtroy the nature of numbers, no more then when it is ſaid *Man, and Wife are One, Chriſt, and Believers are One*, and the many hundred Converts to

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Chriſtianity were of *one Heart, and of one Soul*; there are ſeveral ſorts of Unity, there is an Unity of Conſent, and agreement which may be amongſt a great many, of Power, and Authority which may be poſſeſſed and executed by ſeveral Perſons, who may be all one General, Admiral, Chancellor, and even one Sovereign, and Royal Monarch. A great many Individuals may be one in Nature, and Eſſence as all Mankind are, hence the Diſtinction of a Specifical and Numerical Unity, and of a Specifical and Numerical Eſſence, though I take Eſſence to be a common Nature, or General Idea, taking in ſeveral things at one view, and that there is no ſuch thing as particular Eſſence, diſtinct from particular Beings; ſo that there is no multiplication of Eſſence in ſeveral Divine Perſons, or Beings. Now as to thoſe three being One, it may be meant in any way whatever, ſo far as thoſe words alone import; but there are other places of Scripture, and there is a connexion, and analogy of our Faith from all places, compared together, which oblige us to believe that the Son,

and

and Holy Ghoſt have the ſame Divine Nature and Eſſence with the Father, derived, and communicated to them, Eternally, Permanently, and Perpetually, and that they are in the Father, as in the Fountain of their Being; and are naturally, and inſeparably united to him, and that he is the ſelf-exiſtent, Unoriginated Principle, the Root and Fountain of the other two, and therefore they are One with him, becauſe though having real Beings, and ſubſiſtences of their own, yet they are from him, and in him.

But ſtill it will be objected, that each of them is God; the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghoſt is God, and then there muſt be Three Gods, and yet but One God; which brings the contradiction ſtill upon us. I Anſwer; The One God is ſpoken of God the Father in Scripture as I have ſhown you; and as a great many *, and particularly Biſhop * *Pearſon* upon the *Creed*, obſerves, "That *the Name* "*of God taken abſolutely is*

* *Ignat. Irenæ. Athanaſ. Greg. Naz. Euſeb. Novat. Hilar. Ambroſe, Auſtin, Calv. Zanchy, Comen. Petau. Bull.* &c.

* *Art.* 1.

"often

" often in Scripture *spoken of the Father,*
" *and is* (in many places) *to be taken par-*
" *ticularly of the Father, and from hence,*
" says he, *he is stiled One God, the*
" *True God, the Only True God*; and
" this he sayes further, *is a most ne-*
" *cessary Truth to be acknowledged for the*
" *avoiding multiplication, and Plura-*
" *lity of Gods.* He laying the Unity mainly here as I have done; so that though the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; which they are not often call'd in Scripture, which rather reserves, and gives the name of God absolutely and peculiarly to the Father *; as, *God loved the World, God sent his Son,* and the like; yet neither of them are meant by that one God which the Scripture speaks of, when it speaks peculiarly of the Father. They indeed having the Divine Nature, and the Divine Attributes and Perfections belonging to them, may each of them be properly called God, and the Divinity does certainly and

* *Observandum est quodplerumque Paulus suis Epistolis non nen Dei Patri tribuit in Novo Testamento plerumq; tantum prima persona vocatur Deus.* Flac. Illyric. Clavis Scripturæ in verbo Deus.

and truly belong to each of them, but then the Word God is not taken alwayes in one, and the ſame Sence, but it is ſometimes meant of one Perſon, and ſometimes of another, or of all, being taken either Eſſentially or Perſonally, as all Divines own; and generally if not alwayes in Scripture taken abſolutely, and ſpoken ſo of one God, it is meant of God the Father, which may give us ſuch an account of the Trinity, and of the Unity, as may take off all the charge of a contradiction ſince they are not one, & three, nor is each of them God, and all of them God, or one God in the ſame reſpect, ſenſe, and meaning of the words, but in different. Thoſe Terms being not alwayes taken in the ſame adæquate Univocal Senſe, but are uſed often Equivocally. The Father is the only ſelf-exiſtent, unoriginated Being, the Cauſe, and Root, ἀρχὴ, ῥίζα of the other two as the Antients often call him, and ſo is the moſt abſolutely Perfect Being, and God in the

Ubi enim eſt diverſa ſignificatio non eſt contradictio Affirmantis & negantis, Æquivocatio enim impedit contradictionem. Aquin. Sum. P. 1. Qu. 13.

the highest Sense, and the Scriptures, Creeds, and Christian Offices call him so absolutely and by way of Eminence, and Prerogative. The Son is produced of the Father and so is not Αὐτοθεὸς, or God, in that Sense as the Father who is from none, but is *God of God*, and is *very God*, as having the Divine Nature, and Perfections belonging to him but Communicated and derived from the Father, as the Holy Ghost from both.

3. As by our Faiths being Mysterious, and Incomprehensible, and Unaccountable to our Reason, I do not mean that 'its Idea's, or Terms destroy one another, or imply a contradiction which is to make it contrary to it self, so neither is it contrary to any certain Principle of Reason, nor to any Natural Truth whatsoever known to us, If it were it could not be true, for one Truth cannot be contrary to another, and what is true by Nature, cannot be false by Revelation, for then God the Author of both and the God of Truth would lye and contradict himself.

There

There are common notions, Principles of Reaſon, and ſome Natural Truths known by Senſe, and Experience which we are as certain of as of our Beings, and which are the Foundations of all Knowledge, and which we have ſuch evidence of, that to give them up would be to run into boundleſs Scepticiſme, and own nothing to be True, or Falſe, but that God hath made us of ſuch faculties, that we might be deceived in every thing, now Revelation can by no means deſtroy theſe, as that the whole is greater then a part, that one is not three, nor three one in the ſame reſpect, and meaning, that a Body cannot be in two places at once, that our Senſes are true, and the like, and therefore Tranſubſtantiation cannot be true, nor can that be the Senſe of thoſe words, *this is my Body*, but now in the Trinity there is nothing contrary to any Natural Truth or to any Principle of Reaſon, for that God ſhould have a Son of the ſame Nature, and Divinity with himſelf, and that an Eternal Spirit ſhould proceed from both, tho' it be a Truth by it ſelf, and of pure, and immediate Reve-

Revelation which our Reaſon could not have found out from any known Property of the Divine Nature, nor from any Reaſon, and Neceſſity in the thing it ſelf, yet there is nothing in it contrary to the Natural Notion of a God, or to any other certain Principle of Truth, or Reaſon: The only thing that can be pretended is that of the Divine Unity, which is thought to be ſuch a Natural Notion as to be inconſiſtent with any more Divine Perſons then one, and therefore has been objected againſt the Trinity by all the Adverſaries of this Doctrine, by the *Jews*, and *Mahometans*, by the *Samoſatenians*, the *Photinians*, the *Arrians*, the *Macedonians*, and the *Socinians* who have all charged it with Tritheiſm, and Polytheiſm, contrary to the Divine Unity, but this has been from not underſtanding, what the Divine Unity was and wherein it truly conſiſted according to the Scriptural account I have given of it, which wholly takes off this Objection;

There are ſeveral things I own in the Bleſſed Trinity Incomprehenſible to our Reaſon, and Unconceivable, and Unaccountable

accountable to our Finite Underſtandings, when they are imployed about ſo great, and Infinite an Object, which is too big for them, and ſo much above them, As why, and how an Infinite, All-ſufficient God ſhould produce an Eternal Son, and Communicate the ſame Nature to him with himſelf, whether this were by a voluntary, or a neceſſary Production, and Emanation, and how the Proceſſion of the Holy Ghoſt differs from the Generation of the Son any otherwiſe, than as that was an Emanation from both, and not from the Father alone, and how three ſuch Infinite Perſons are ſo diſtinct from one another, as not to be confounded, or be the ſame, tho' Omnipreſent, and in the ſame Infinite *Ubi*; and tho' ſo Inſeparably united, yet the one to take fleſh, and be Incarnate, and not the other; Theſe, and other things relating to this Myſtery of our Chriſtian Faith, are I ſay Incomprehenſible, Unconceiveable, and Unaccountable to our Reaſon, by which I mean only that we can compare 'em to nothing elſe that we certainly know, that we have no perfect, or abſolute likeneſs of them

them in any thing elſe, that we have no adequate Idea ſimple, or complex, no ſimilitude, or Repreſentation of any ſuch thing in our minds from any thing elſe in Nature, but that 'tis a Truth purely known, and manifeſted by Revelation, joyning together, and connecting ſuch Idea's concerning God, and ſo preſenting them to the mind as united together under one view, and ſo compounded, and complicated with one another that tho' they do not diſagree, nor are contrary to one another yet we ſee not perfectly their agreement, or connection, but have only an obſcure, and general, and confuſed view, and conception of them, as we have a ſight of ſuch Objects, which are too high, or too remote for our eye thoroughly to ken, and yet we ſee them tho' not by the naked Eye, yet by the help of a glaſs, or Teleſcope ſo as to be ſatisfied of the Truth of them.

Revelation is as a Teleſcope, and our Reaſon, and Underſtanding is as the Eye, which could not by its naked Power diſcern, or find out thoſe high Ob-

Objects, and ſupernatual Truths of our Chriſtian Faith, but now by Revelation they are diſcovered to us, and our Reaſon, and Underſtanding as the Organ without which we cannot ſee, or believe any thing, does plainly ſee, and diſcern them, but it is as through a glaſs darkly, as having ſomething of Cloud, and darkneſs about them, or as we ſee the Sun which is an object too dazling, and illuſtrious to look fully upon with our weak Eyes:

The Sun with 'its coeval light, and heat, is an uſual reſemblance of the ſacred Trinity, and is the beſt material one that is in Nature, but light, and heat are but qualities, and motions, not ſubſtantial Things, and are though not divided from the Sun, yet without it, and not in it; ſo the fountain, River, and ſtreams are but imperfect, partial Reſemblances, as having the ſame water in all, and not being cut off, or ſeparated from the Fountain; but all material likeneſſes muſt fail when applyed to Spiritual things; Our own Soul is the beſt Image of God, and without it we ſhould not know what God, or

Wiſ-

Wiſdom, or any of his Perfectionswere, the two faculties of Underſtanding, and Will are the moſt like to the Divine λόγος and Wiſdom, and to the Divine Spirit, power, and Energy, and in alluſion to theſe the Schoolmen would have the Son to be begotten *per Intellectum*, by a direct act of the Divine Mind conceiving an Idea of 'its Self, and the Holy Ghoſt to proceed by a reflexion *per amorem*, by an active Love of it ſelf upon ſuch a Conception: But theſe men have been the moſt raſh, and bold explainers of the Trinity, which is a Truth, and an Object by it Self, to which nothing elſe is perfectly like, and of which we can have no Comparative knowledge, nor no compleat, and adequate Idea, or Comprehenſion; for the two ſacred Originated Perſons are not two faculties, but two ſubſtantial Perſons, and Real Beings, the Scripture aſcribing as diſtinct Properties, Relations, Attributes, Characters, Acts, and Operations to each of them as to any other diſtinct Perſons and Beings whatſoever, as the Son to be begotten of the Father, to be ſent into the World by the Father, to pray

to

to the Father, and mediate with the Father. Now the ſame Being and Perſon cannot be Father, and Son to it Self, beget, and be begotten of it Self, ſend, and be ſent by it Self, pray to, and mediate with it Self, and the like may be ſaid as to the Spirit; Theſe are not therefore like one, and the ſame mind, with two faculties, or two acts, or operations, or only as variouſly conſidered two ways, nor are they one thing, or one Being diverſified only with three Names, Titles, Offices, Characters, Capacities, Reſpects, or any three differences whatever belonging to one Perſon, or Being, but three true, proper, real, Divine Perſons, The One the Father, the other the Son, the third the Spirit of both.

Now nothing in our own minds, or in viſible Nature is perfectly like theſe, or to which we can compare them, or from whence we can draw a Similitude, Repreſentation, or Idea of them, and therefore they are Incomprehenſible, and Unconceivable by us, for 'tis by Compariſon, and likeneſs we chiefly know, and conceive things, and 'tis

hard to diſtinguiſh between Knowledge, Conception, and Imagination; ſo that what ſome perſons cannot imagine, or cannot have a picture or likeneſs of in their Fancy, and Imagination, they ſay they cannot conceive, and therefore ſome pretend they can have no Conceptions of a Spiritual Subſtance, and others no Idæa of the Trinity, nor even of God, by which they mean they cannot have a Picture or Idea, or likeneſs of theſe things in their Imagination; but we know, and believe, and are well aſſur'd of a great many things without that; as of all Mathematical and Metaphyſical Verities about abſtracted things; of all Axioms, and Common Notions; of all Demonſtrations about Lines and Numbers; of all things not Corporeal, as Time, Motion; the Acts and Operations of our own Minds, ſuch as Underſtanding, Chooſing, Suſpending, Doubting, and the like; all which we know by Reaſon, and can reaſon about, though we can have no Pictures, or imaginary Idæa's of them, or any other likeneſſes of them. I ſhall ſhow for the Defence

of

of Myſteries, and of the Myſtery of the Trinity, and the Chriſtian Faith, that there are a great many other things which are Incomprehenſible, and unconceivable to us, concerning which we are well aſſur'd, and have no doubt of them, and this in ſeveral Particulars.

1. In viſible Nature, and in the Material World that lyes before us.

2. In our own Minds, and in Spiritual Beings.

3. In Arts, and Sciences.

4. In Natural Religion.

5. In Revelation, or the other parts of it beſides the Myſtery of the Trinity, and the Chriſtian Faith.

6. I ſhall add that the *Socinians*, and other Adverſaries to Myſteries, run into greater Difficulties, and Incomprehenſible things in their Schemes, than thoſe they oppoſe.

But theſe, and what remains upon the ſecond General Head of Diſcourſe, to wit, how we are to hold the Myſtery of Faith in a pure Conſcience, I ſhall leave to the Afternoon.

THE MYSTERY OF THE Chriſtian Faith AND OF THE *Bleſſed TRINITY* VINDICATED.

SERMON II.

1 TIM. iii. 9.

Holding the Myſtery of the Faith in a pure Conſcience.

I Propoſed to Diſcourſe from theſe words on theſe two things.

I. *Why the Chriſtian Faith is called a Myſtery?*

II. *How*

II. *How we are to hold it in a pure Conscience.*

The Christian Faith was a Mystery, I have shewn upon three Accounts.

1. *As it was not knowable by Natural Reason without an Expreſs and immediate Divine Revelation.*
2. *As it was very Imperfectly and Obscurely revealed before the Gospel, and the Coming of Christ.*
3. *As it is Incomprehensible to our Reason, and what we cannot fully Conceive and Apprehend even after it is clearly Revealed.*

The *Socinians*, and other Adversaries to Mysteries, and to the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, are for Believing nothing which they cannot Comprehend and Understand, and will admit nothing Mysterious in Christianity; and therefore are for rejecting such Doctrines, those especially of the Trinity, as are so, and will allow the Christian Faith to be a Mystery only in the two former Senses but not in the latter

latter; and they expoſe and ridicule all Myſteries, and the believing things they do not underſtand as the moſt abſurd and unreaſonable Opinions, as the believing only ſo many words without any ſenſe or meaning, as deſtroying the certain principles of Truth and Reaſon, and unmanning our ſelves to become Chriſtians, and ſwallowing down the moſt monſtrous Abſurdities and Contradictions, and calling them by the name of Faith and Myſteries. I have ſhown that our Chriſtian Faith, even that of the Trinity is not liable to thoſe Objections; that by its being Incomprehenſible we do not mean that we have no Knowledge or Conception at all of it, or that it is only ſo many words without any ſenſe or meaning underſtood by us, or that it is contrary to any natural Truth, or to any Principles of Reaſon known to us, or that it implies a Contradiction, or has any Inconſiſtencies in it; but only that we cannot underſtand it fully, and every thing that belongs to it; that there is nothing elſe we know to which we can compare it, nor have any perfect like-

neſs or reſemblance of it by any thing in viſible Nature or in our own Minds; that it is a Truth and an Object by it ſelf, made known to us purely by Revelation, and ſuch a Complex Idæa or Connexion of Idæas that we have no other Idæa, Similitude or Repreſentation that exactly anſwers or comes perfectly up to, and therefore it is Incomprehenſible and Unconceivable by us, and an Object too great and too big for our weak Reaſon and Imperfect Faculties fully to underſtand. That there is ſomething in it beyond all our Knowledge and all our Conceptions, and yet that it is not upon that account to be rejected and disbelieved by us; but ſince the Truth and Reality of it is made known and diſcovered to us by Revelation, the Difficulty and Incomprehenſibleneſs and Myſteriouſneſs of the thing is not a ſufficient Argument or Reaſon for our not believing it. To Prove and Maintain this, and to Defend the Myſtery of our Chriſtian Faith, and the Doctrine of Myſteries in General, I propoſed to ſhow and make out that there are a great many other things

which

which are Myſterious and Incomprehenſible to us, and which we cannot fully Conceive or Underſtand, and yet do no way doubt the Truth of them, but Mankind are very well ſatisfied and aſſured about them. As,

1. *In Viſible Nature, and in the Material World that lyes before us.*
2. *In our own Minds, and in Spiritual Beings.*
3. *In Arts and Sciences.*
4. *In Natural Religion.*
5. *In Revelation, I mean the other parts of it beſides the Myſtery of the Trinity, and the Chriſtian Faith.*
6. Laſtly, To theſe I ſhall add, *That the* Socinians, *and other Adverſaries to Myſteries, have as many Difficulties and Incomprehenſible Things in their Schemes as thoſe they oppoſe.*

1. *There are many things in Viſible Nature, and in the Material World, which are Myſterious and Incomprehenſible to us.* Indeed all Nature is full of Myſtery, and ſhowes the admirable and

and incomprehenſible Wiſdom of its great Author and Contriver; the Heavens above, where are ſo many glorious Luminaries, ſo many ſhining Worlds and new Earths ſo much bigger than ours, ſo many Globes of Fire that are maintained we know not how, that keep ſuch exact Order and Diſtance to us and to one another, and move in their Liquid Æther in ſuch exact Lines by Cauſes unknown to us, as if ſo many Intelligencies guided them rather than the whirling Streams of their own fluid Vortices: The Earth alſo beneath, where are ſo many Animals of ſuch curious Make and Structure, that the formation of them, their Life, Motion, the Compoſition and Uſes of all their Parts are things to be admired, not comprehended by us; where every Fly, and Mite, and Inſect, and every Spire of Graſs we tread on, is beyond all our Knowledge and Phyloſophy to give a full account of; and the greateſt Theoriſt can no more underſtand all that belongs to 'em than he can make 'em. Theſe are ſufficient Inſtances of the Imperfection of our Knowledge, and of the Greatneſs of Gods; we that know

know ſo little of them and of our ſelves, how we live or how we move ſo much as a Finger; how our Bodies were wonderfully formed, and curiouſly wrought in the Womb; and how Blood and Spirits make their brisk Sallies through every part, and by ſuch various Fermentations keep up Life and Heat in us, and how the ſolid parts are nouriſhed and increaſed by them, and how every new Fibre and Muſcle is woven and knit about them; what an admirable Net-work, and unaccountable Mechaniſm is in the Eye, Brain, Heart; in every part, and in the whole of us. We that comprehend and underſtand ſo little of this, and of our own bodily Nature, how can we be ſuppoſed to underſtand and comprehend every thing that belongs to the Divine Nature, and not be as much puzzled and confounded about the knowledge of that, as we are about our own.

If we knew any thing perfectly, it ſhould be matter ſurely, and what lies juſt before us; and yet we know nothing of that but its outward accidents and a few of its qualities, its colour and figure, and hardneſs or ſoftneſs, or the like,

like, but its inward ſubſtance, and what is the ſubject and *Subſtratum* of theſe accidents and qualities we know nothing of. How the parts of Matter are united, what makes them ſo cloſe and inſeparable in a ſolid Stone or Diamond more than in a heap of Sand, whither reſt and *juxta* poſition, or what hooks and faſtnings tyes them together is unknown to us; whether the parts of matter are diviſible or indiviſible, is ſuch a puzzling Problem, that both ſides have a Demonſtration though it be for a plain Contradiction. Light is the cleareſt object of our Senſes, and yet our Knowledge of that is very dark and obſcure; we know not how it darts it ſelf in a moment from Heaven to Earth, and how it cauſes Viſion in the Eye, and how ſo vaſt a number of Objects are received into that ſmall Room at once, and make their ſeveral motions, and draw all their Pictures there; indeed how any of our Senſes perceive theſe Objects, and how we have ſuch Conceptions and Phantaſms raiſed in us by them, which are not in the Objects themſelves, (for Bitter and

Sweet,

Sweet, Pain and Pleaſure, Heat and Cold is not in any of them, nor any thing like them, but only in our ſelves) and by what ſecret Powers they excite thoſe Sentiments is as unaccountable as it is obvious. We muſt reſolve all theſe things, and all the Phœnomina of Nature into the will and appointment of the firſt cauſe, thither we muſt bring and there we muſt leave all the Laws of Matter and Motion: We can trace them all thither, and we can go no farther, but muſt ſtop at theſe incomprehenſible bounds and limits of all our Natural Knowledge.

2. If we riſe higher and look beyond Matter, and conſider what we know of Spiritual Beings, and of the Intellectual World, we ſhall find that to be a dark *Hades*, and as unintelligible to us. We know indeed that there muſt be ſomething above Matter; and that Wiſdom, and Thoughts, and Contrivance, which every where appear in the Fabrick of the World, and in the Structure of our own and every Animals Body, muſt proceed not from rambling Atoms, and from ſenſeleſs

and

and needleſs matter but from a Wiſe Mind and an Underſtanding Being; and we feel and perceive in our ſelves ſomething that is above body, that thinks and reflects and conſiders, that reaſons and diſcourſes and deduces one thing from another, and determines it ſelf, and acts freely, and moves our Bodies as it pleaſes and ſtops them motion, and has an αὐτεξούσιον and ἀνεξέλεγκτον, and is ſenſible of Pain or Pleaſure from things paſt or future which Body and Matter cannot be, and this is what we call our Soul; and we know it by theſe Properties, and have as much an Idæa of it as of Body, Thinking being as certain and well known to us as Extenſion, but what is the Eſſence or Subſtance or inward Conſtitution of what thinks or is extended, this we are equally ignorant of; and how this Spiritual Subſtance came into the Body, whether it was infuſed by God upon an immediate Creation, or Emaned and propagated from the Parents Soul, which was an old Opinion of the *Eaſterns*, the *Syrians*, and *Arabians*, and of many others, and does no way

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infer its Corporeity, by what Vital Charm or Congruity it is united to it, by what *nexus* it is so joyned and fastned to Matter, as not to be released from it when it pleases; this is unconceivable and unintelligible to us. Why are we therefore so afraid and unwilling to believe the Mysteries of the Divine, the highest Spiritual Nature, when we have so many in our own which is the lowest? Why is the Divine Generation of the Son so incredible, when so many Wise and Learned Persons * have been of Opinion that even Humane Souls are generated, and this without any discerption or division of parts which belongs not to Spiritual Beings? Why is the Incarnation of Christ, or the Divine Natures being united to the Humane thought more unintelligible than the Soul being United to the Body without any commensuration of parts or equal Extension? And why is the Sacred Trinity Condemned as so absurd a Mystery, or three Divine Persons so inseparably united together, when so many Philoso-

* *As Sa* Hierome *tells us* Tom. 2. Ep. 82.

phers

phers of old have thought that every Man had three Immaterial Principles or Souls in him; the Rational, the Senſitive, and the Vegetative; though of late we have held that theſe Three are One. Is not the Mind one pure Act or Energy? and yet it has three Faculties in it of Underſtanding, Will and Memory, which are not the ſame, and yet belong to one Soul.

3. There are a great many things in Arts and Sciences which are Unconceivable and Unintelligible to thoſe who are the beſt skilled in them, and eſpecially to others who are not. Thus in Phyſicks, in Mathematicks, in Chymiſtry, in Aſtronomy, in Navigation, and other Sciences, how many ſtrange and extraordinary and wonderful things are there which thoſe who are ignorant would hardly believe, and to thoſe who know them they are Incomprehenſible. I might produce a great many Inſtances from all of them, but ſhall only touch upon a few. Who would not have thought the Loadſtone a very Myſterious thing, and the *Pixis Nautica* when firſt found out, and who does

does not think them ſo ſtill, and who can give a full account of them by ſtriate Particles and the Magnetiſm of the Earth, which is going very little further then to an occult quality. And a great many ſuch occult qualities and unaccountable Appearances there are in Nature, and Phyloſophy, which are much like Myſteries in Religion and in Revelation, which when our knowledge is improved we ſhall know better. The Flux and Reflux of the Sea continues to be ſo ſtill for any Hypotheſis that can perfectly ſolve it. The Circulation of the Blood through the whole Body was not long ago thought to be ſo, and the Periods of Agues and Feavers is ſtill acknowledged to be one. The believing there were Antipodes was not many Ages ago thought to be Hereſy, and *Virgilius* a Biſhop in *Germany* was condemned for it by Pope *Zachary* in the 8th. *Century*. *Aventin. Annal. Anno* 745.

The Phyloſophers Stone has been greatly talked of, and will be acknowledged a Myſtery though ſo many have pretended to it, and even though it were

found out. And to one who has lived always in the Hot Countreys, and under the Torrid Zone. the having Water turn'd into Ice, and a River congealed into a Solid Rock, will be as Incredible a Myſtery; ſo likewiſe to have a Tranſparent Glaſs made out of Sand and an opac Body, and a Plant, as they ſay, raiſed out of its Aſhes by the Power of Chymiſtry. The Power of Numbers, and the performances of Algebra, and many Problems in Mathematics may paſs for Magical to a great many, as they have done always to the ignorant; and ſome of them are unaccountable and Incomprehenſible to thoſe who know and can demonſtrate them; as the Infinite Diviſion of Numbers in Decimal Fractions; the Caſe of aſymptotes. How two Lines may be ſo drawn, as always to approach and come nearer one another, and yet never touch one another, tho' drawn in *infinitum*. The like Inſtances might be given of other Myſteries in Arts and Sciences, which are as Incredible and Unreaſonable to thoſe who do not know them, as any Myſteries

in

in Religion, and yet are certainly true, and unqueſtionably believed by thoſe who do, and yet to them a great many of them may be Incomprehenſible. 'Tis only Ignorance and want of Knowledge makes them ſeem unreaſonable and incredible; the more we improve in thoſe Arts, the more we ſhall ſee the Truth of them, and have no doubt about them. And ſo it is in the Myſteries of Religion; 'tis the ſhallowneſs and weakneſs of our Faculties makes them difficult and incomprehenſible to us: When we come to know God better, eſpecially in another World, theſe reveal'd Truths concerning his Nature will be better underſtood and comprehended by us, though now to deny and disbelieve them after they ſo are fully revealed becauſe they are Incomprehenſible, is as if an Ignorant Perſon ſhould call in queſtion all Truths of thoſe Arts and Sciences which he does not underſtand, and which are Incomprehenſible to him.

4. There are Incomprehenſible Truths in Natural Religion as well as in Revelation, and in the Myſtery of the Chriſtian

ſtian Faith. God who is known by Nature, and whoſe Being and Perfections are the great objects of natural Religion, is as Incomprehenſible and as much too big for our finite Reaſon and Faculties fully to Comprehend as any of the Articles of Revealed Religion or Chriſtian Faith. His αὐτοσία or Self-Exiſtence is ſuch a thing as our Thoughts are wholly loſt about when we conſider of it, and yet ſomething muſt be ſelf-exiſtent even by the Atheiſtic hypotheſis. So ſomething muſt be Eternal, and yet let any man try his thoughts about Eternity, Infinite Duration, or Infinite Succeſſion, and ſee how they are ſwallowed up in thoſe deeps of Speculation? Let him conceive if he can Eternity without Succeſſion, and Immenſity without Extenſion, and clear himſelf from that Contradiction, if applyed to any thing but God, that what is paſt or future is yet preſent, that he now exiſts, to morrow, and that a thouſand years ago his Duration was the ſame as now, and nothing is added to it, he may improve theſe into as puzling and incomprehenſible

ſible difficulties if he pleaſes, as any thing about the Trinity. What ſhall we think of that inextricable Difficulty of Gods preſcience of all Humane Actions by which they are certain, and yet of our Liberty by which they are contingent, when it is as hard to make thoſe two Conſiſtent as to make Father and Son to be one, and yet we muſt do ſo, or elſe rob God of one of his greateſt Perfections, or elſe rob Man of his Will and Freedom, and ſo deſtroy all Moral Good and Evil. Since there are then ſo many Myſteries and Incomprehenſible Truths even in Natural Religion, which our Deiſts I hope do ſincerely believe, and which is owned to be the foundation of all other, why ſhould we wonder at thoſe which are not much greater in Revelation, and in the Myſtery of Chriſtian Faith. The Creation of the World out of nothing is as Inconceivable and as Myſterious as the Generation of the Son from the Father, and one Infinite Being is as much too big for our Finite Underſtandings to Comprehend as Three, and his Attributes and Perfections are as hard

to be distinguished, and as irreconcileable with the simplicity of the Divine Nature as multiplicity of Persons. His Justice and his Mercy, his Power, Wisdom and Goodness are no more the same as conceived by us; but excite as truly different Ideas in us as his being a Father, and begetting a Son, and having a holy Ghost proceeding from him; but yet the three Persons are more than three Attributes, and the same person cannot be Father and Son to himself as he is Just and Merciful to us; nor is it only three Considerations, Capacities, or Titles of one Being, but three proper and distinct Persons that constitute the Sacred Trinity. But we may as well conceive a monad emaning or producing two from it self, as Creating all things out of nothing, and being as Infinite as himself and the World both, and as having three several Attributes distinct in themselves, and not Confounded or Identified with one another.

5. There are other Truths in Revelation as Incomprehensible and Unconceivable as this of the Trinity, or the

Mystery

Myſtery of Chriſtian Faith. To mention nothing elſe, thoſe many Miracles which are the proof and demonſtration of the Divine Revelation, and which muſt be acknowledged by all thoſe who admit it, and are not at all queſtion'd by our *Socinian* Adverſaries, theſe are as Incomprehenſible and Unintelligible to us as any Articles of our Faith; they are matters as much above our Reaſon and do as much exceed all other things we know, and all the likeneſſes and compoſitions of any thing we are acquainted with in Nature, as the Trinity or any thing elſe in Revelation. The Divine Power is no more limited to do thoſe things only which we can conceive, than the Divine Veracity to Reveal thoſe things only which we can Comprehend, and yet we are to believe both. If we could conceive fully how the one was done, we might do it our ſelves; and if we could comprehend perfectly how the others are true, and how thoſe ſeveral Ideas are connected and agree together, we might compound them our ſelves; and ſo God would not be more Powerful or more

Wiſe than Man is. Our Finite Underſtanding is no more able to comprehend all that God does, than our Finite Power to effect every thing that he can. Miracles are as much above us as to Facts, and as much Myſteries as to the Laws of Matter and Motion and the known properties of Bodies, as Revealed Articles are above us as to Truths and known principles of Reaſon, and as to any other comparative Ideas and repreſentations of things which are Familiar to us, and which we are well acquainted with. Our Adverſaries may therefore as well deny all Miracles, as being Unconceivable and Incomprehenſible to their Reaſon, and as Myſterious Facts which are very much above Nature, and above all our Conceptions, as the Myſteries of Faith, and the Principles of Revealed Religion ſuch as the Bleſſed Trinity, upon this very ſcore and account; and may for the ſame Reaſon diſcard all Revelation and all natural Religion, which I fear is the deſign of ſome of them, but I hope not of the greateſt part.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, I propoſed to ſhow that there are as many Difficulties and more Myſteries in their ſenſe; that is Inconſiſtencies and Abſurdities in the *Socinian* Scheme and Syſtem of Opinions than in the Orthodox Faith they oppoſe. Thus to make a mere Man a God, to exalt a Creature to ſuch a Degree as to be capable of Divine Worſhip, to pray to him and truſt in him as a God, and hope for Salvation from him, and yet to believe him to be only a Man is an Abſurdity ſo groſs, ſo contrary to all Notions of God and a Creature, and confounding all this Infinite diſtance and difference between them, and ſo deſtroying all the Reaſons and arguments of giving Divine Worſhip to God only, and ſuch a Principle of Paganiſm and Idolatry ſo directly contrary to Chriſtianity that nothing is comparable to it, were it never ſo true, but which with the greateſt falſeneſs they object to the contrary ſide. It does highly aggravate and increaſe this difficulty and abſurdity, and no way leſſen and abate it, to aſcribe as they do all the Divine Perfections of Almighty Power and

and Infinite Goodneſs and Vertual Omnipreſence to this mere Man and born Creature, which is not only robbing God of his Incommunicable Attributes, and giving his Glory to Another, but taking away all the ſtrongeſt Arguments for proving God to be Almighty and All-perfect by making a man to be ſo, and therefore capable to make and Create the World as well as God himſelf; for if he is capable of ſuch Perfections as belong to God, he is capable of doing the ſame things, and ſo of taking his Work out of his hands, and then we cannot prove a God from the Creation, ſince a man a Creature, if as powerful and as perfect as God, which they make Chriſt to be under this conſideration, may be able alſo to effect; and Redemption is a Greater and a more Glorious work then Creation, and if that may be accompliſhed by a mere man, and we can owe our Salvation to him as ſuch, then we owe more thanks and greater praiſes and acknowledgments, and more gratitude to him, to the Lord that bought us than we do even to the Lord that made us. I

might

might Inſtance in a great many other Particulars, but I muſt proceed to

The Second General Head of Diſcourſe, *How we are to Hold the Myſtery of the Faith in a pure Conſcience* : By which theſe ſeveral Things may be implyed,

1. *That out of Regard to the Revelation, and out of Conſcience of believing whatever God reveals to us, we firmly aſſent to it, and bring our Underſtandings to comply with it, notwithſtanding the Difficulty and Myſteriouſneſs of the Thing.*
2. *That we do not out of Vanity or Singularity, or from any faults of the Will or Siniſter Ends and Deſigns pervert or corrupt or deny this Myſtery of Faith.*
3. *That we hold and maintain it with Chriſtian and Good Tempers.*
4. *With a Good Life in General, and with a Conſcience ſo pure as to be void of all ſin and wilful wickedneſs.*

1. *That*

1. *That out of regard to, &c.* Otherwiſe we take away both the Truth and the Authority of Divine Revelation, and make it with a late Author, *Not a motive of Aſſent but only a means of Information.* Or as he further words it, *Not a Ground of our Perſwaſion, or a Reaſon we have to believe a Thing, as if we were to receive it only becauſe revealed*; which he will not allow, *but only from the evidence in the thing it ſelf, and the clear Conception we form of it.* If ſo, then Revelation is only to lay ſuch things before us, and we are to judge of the Truth of them our ſelves; and the truth of things depends not upon the Revelation, nor is our belief of them to be reſolved into that, but into our own Conceptions, ſo that we are not to believe them becauſe the God of Truth reveals them, but becauſe we have other reaſons to know they are true. This is ſetting aſide the Infallibility and Authority of Divine Revelation, and Judging the matter over again by our own Reaſon,

Chriſtianity not Myſterious. pag. 38.

and

and making that Superior to it: So that if what God reveals be never ſo clear and plain, and the ſenſe and meaning of the Words be never ſo evident, yet if there be not an Evidence in the thing, and it do not carry its own Conviction in it, and we have not a perſpicuous and diſtinct Conception of it, then we have not Reaſon to believe it as true. At this rate Revelation muſt never go beyond our Natural Knowledge, and let God ſay or reveal what he pleaſes to us, yet we are not bound to believe it barely upon his Word, without ſome further reaſon or ſome other ground of perſwaſion from the thing it ſelf. This is a moſt Arrogant and Impudent treating of God and the Holy Scriptures, and barring them from revealing any thing, and excuſing us from believing it, if we have not ſome further ground and reaſon for it. But ſurely God is true, and his Word to be Credited for it ſelf alone without any further Security or Evidence of the thing it ſelf; and if we are once ſatisfied about the Revelation, and do own that to be true, we are not to demurre to the

plain

plain ſenſe and meaning of it, though there be no other Evidence in the thing, nor any other ground of perſwaſion for the Truth of it but only *that*; and ſure we are as much bound to bring our Reaſon and Underſtandings to ſubmit to the Truth of what God ſays, as our Wills to the Obedience of what he Commands; though we have no other reaſon for the Truth of the one or the goodneſs of the other, and though both may ſeem very difficult to us: Elſe we make our ſelves, and not God, Judges of what is true and falſe, and either prejudge a thing not to be true, whatever he ſays of it, and ſo prevent any Revelation about it, or elſe Judge it over again by other Meaſures, and condemn and reject it if it comport not with thoſe, and be not conformable and agreeable to our Reaſon and Conceptions of things, though we know nothing of it but by Revelation, and that both clear, and evident, and undoubted.

2. Our holding the Myſtery of the Faith in a pure Conſcience, implies That

That we do not Pervert, Corrupt, or Deny it out of any Vanity and Vain-glory, Singularity, or Affectation of Novelty, or out of any corrupt Inclination and fault of the Will, or any Sinister and by-end whatsoever. Most Hereſies have proceeded from ſome ſuch Cauſes as theſe, and therefore are by the Apoſtle call'd the works of the Fleſh, *Gal.* 5. 20. The Error having had its firſt Riſe and Original, not ſo much from the Weakneſs and Infirmity of the Underſtanding, as from the ſtrength and Obſtinacy, the Corruption and Depravity of the Will, and it has had its chief tincture of Malignity and poyſon from this root of Bitterneſs and from this corrupt fountain from whence it ſprung and aroſe. A proud and conceited opinion of Mens being Wiſer not only than their Teachers, but than the whole Chriſtian Church; and a natural itch after Novelty and Curioſity, and the pleaſing vanity of being Singular and Remarkable, or of being the Heads of a Party, and giving the Name and Denomination to a New Sect of Followers, this has made a great

great many in former and latter Ages ſet up for new Opinions in oppoſition to the Antient Faith, and endeavour to pull that down that they might erect Trophies of vain-glory to themſelves upon the ruins of it. It is not ſo eaſie always, nor ſo well indeed, for others to judge this of them; but if they would judge themſelves, and ſearch impartially into their own Hearts, they would find the Truth and meaning of what the Apoſtle ſays, *Tit.* 3, 11. That ſuch an Heretick is αὐτοκατάκριτος condemned of himſelf, and beſt knows and is Conſcious to himſelf of the undue and faulty Reaſons, and the ſiniſter and by-ends and deſigns which were the ſecret Springs and corrupt Cauſes of his Hereſie, of his Eſpouſing ſuch a ſingular and Novel Opinion out of a ſpirit of Contradiction, or a proud Conceitedneſs of his own Parts, Wiſdom or Learning above others, or perhaps for ſome more Worldly and Carnal Reaſons to ſerve a Party or carry on an Intereſt, according to the Character the Apoſtle gives of ſuch an Heretick of old, 1 *Tim.* 6. 4, 5. *He*

is

is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions and ſtrifes of words, whereof cometh envy, ſtrife, railings, evil ſurmiſings, perverſe Diſputing of men of corrupt minds, and deſtitute of the truth, ſuppoſing that gain is Godlineſs: And *who for filthy Lucres ſake taught things which they ought not*; as he charges them in another place, *Tit.* 1. 11. And in our days I doubt ſome mens oppoſing the Faith, and others contending about it, is more contending for this World and ſome Intereſts in it, then for any thing elſe; Envy and Emulation and a Competition about thoſe being more at the bottom of ſome Diſputes among us, than a Zeal for the Faith, falſly ſo called, and only hypocritically pretended: But this if it prove not a Corrupting the Faith, is to be ſure not Holding it in a pure Conſcience. For,

3. We muſt hold this Myſtery of Faith with a Chriſtian good Temper, and not loſe that whilſt we are contending for the other, nor let our Contentions grow ſo warm and intempe-

rate, ſo fierce and cruel as to forget and violate the plain Morals of Chriſtianity, whilſt we are over-earneſtly diſputing for the Faith of it, or perhaps only for ſome falſe and miſtaken, or at beſt ſome uſeleſs Opinions, and over-nice and ſubtle Controverſies about it. This has been the fault of thoſe who have contended more for Victory than Truth, and more for their own Credit and Vain-glory than the Chriſtian Faith; who though they may be in the right, as 'tis ten to one that they are not, for Truth ſeldom dwells with ſuch a Spirit of Rage, and Pride, and Paſſion, but rather with a quite other Temper, yet they greatly deſerve the Cauſe they ſo unduly manage: And as they never are like to convince their Adverſaries, ſo they give others juſt ground to ſuſpect that they apply want of better Reaſon and ſtronger Arguments with weak and impotent Calumny, and with undecent and unbecoming Reflections. This is as Criminal and as Unchriſtian as the Error or the Hereſie they are ſo zealous againſt; and 'tis to be doubted 'tis rather

ther a falſe Fire and an Hypocritical Zeal, not for the Cauſe of God ſo much as their own ; and that this is kindled not from the Altar but ſome other place, and blown up by ſome private pique and ſiniſter deſigns, that thus blazes out to ſuch an outragious degree as to conſume and deſtroy not only its Adverſaries, if it were in its power, but even the moſt vital and ſubſtantial parts of Chriſtianity, Peace, Love and Charity ; and contends for the Chriſtian Faith with ſuch a moſt Diabolical and Unchriſtian Temper. This is very far from the Spirit of Chriſt and Chriſtianity ; and however precious the Faith be, yet the Apoſtle tells us, 1 *Cor.* 13. 2. if we had all Faith, and underſtood all Myſteries and all Knowledge, yet without Charity we are nothing, however great we may be in our own Thoughts ; and ſuch a zeal of ſowreneſs and bitterneſs, as it is generally without Knowledge, ſo it is alwayes without Religion ; and though it hold the Myſtery of the Faith, and do not rather pervert and corrupt it, yet to be ſure this alſo is

not, according to the Apoſtles advice, in a pure Conſcience.

Laſtly, This implies holding it with a good Life in general, and with a Conſcience ſo pure as to be free from all Sin, and all wilful Wickedneſs : For what does the moſt Pure and Orthodox Faith ſignifie, if our Lives are Heretical and Unchriſtian ? For there is no Hereſie ſo damnable and deſtructive, and ſo contrary to Chriſtianity, as a bad Life, and living by Principles of Immorality, and no Orthodoxy is comparable to a good Life and a Chriſtian Converſation. God will ſooner forgive a great many Errors which may proceed from weakneſs of Judgment and want of Information, and be joined with probity and ſincerity of Mind, rather than one Act of wilful Wickedneſs and Immorality, which is committed always againſt the Light of a Mans own Conſcience as well as againſt the Light of the Goſpel, and where there can be no pretence or plea of Ignorance to excuſe it.

Chri-

Chriſtian Faith, in the whole compaſs of it, is deſigned to be a powerful and operative Principle upon our Hearts and Lives, to be a Seed that is not to be ſowed in barren ground, but to grow up in all the priviledges of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs, and to produce not only the Leaves of a formal Profeſſion, and the Bloſſoms of Chriſtian Faith, but the ſound and ſubſtantial Fruit of all Chriſtian and Divine Vertues. This Faith is not only to float in our Heads, and overflow our Tongues, but to ſink down into our Hearts, and become the Vital Principle of a truly Pious, and Holy, and Vertuous Life. Chriſtianity is not only to teach us a new ſcheme and ſet of Opinions, and to make new Articles of Faith for us, but to make us walk in newneſs and holineſs of Life, to ſet the beſt Precepts of Morality, and lay the beſt Models of Vertue before us, and engage us to follow them by the greateſt Arguments and the ſtrongeſt Obligations; and if our Faith do not engage and prevail upon us to do this, it will be ſo far from ſaving us that it will only more

highly condemn us, and increaſe and double our Eternal Damnation. Which God of his Infinite Mercy prevent, through Jeſus Chriſt our Merciful Redeemer.

THE

THE DIVINITY OF CHRIST PROVED.

SERMON III.

JOHN x. 36.

Say ye of him, whom the Father hath ſanctified, and ſent into the world, Thou blaſphemeſt; becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God?

THIS is the Defence of our Bleſſed Saviour againſt the Charge of the *Jews*, who were enraged at his ſaying, that he

was the Son of God; for that it ſeems he had ſaid of himſelf by the words of my Text; and that he and his Father were one, *v.* 30. So that they took up ſtones to ſtone him as guilty of Blaſphemy, becauſe being a Man, he made himſelf God, *v.* 33.

There were ſome Hereticks of old, and are ſo now in our days, who call themſelves Chriſtians, but are much of the *Jews* Opinion, and think Chriſt is but a mere Man, or a Creature, and that he is not the Son of God in a true and proper ſenſe, nor One with the Father as to the Divine Nature; though they do not, like the *Jews*, take up ſtones to throw at Chriſt, as challenging this to himſelf, yet they are if not ſo angry yet more diſingenuous than they upon one account, that they deny the true ſenſe and meaning of Chriſts words, as he ſpoke and underſtood them, which the *Jews* fairly acknowledged, and accuſed him upon it. The *Jews* owned the words of Chriſt in his, and in a right ſenſe, but denyed the truth of the thing; the *Arrians* and *Socinians* deny both the truth of the thing,

thing, and the true meaning of the words. Now 'tis a matter of very great importance to be ſatisfied in both, to know and believe that that great Perſon, whom we call our Saviour, in whom we put our truſt, and confidence, and hopes of Salvation, whom we worſhip and pray to, to whom we devote our ſelves in our Baptiſm, and at other times, that he is not a mere Man or Creature, but as he ſaid of himſelf, *the Son of God* in a proper ſenſe, and *one with the Father*, as having the ſame Divine Nature and Eſſence and Perfection with him that begot him, and ſo a proper object both of our Faith, Hope and Worſhip, which he could not be without both Internal and External Idolatry if he were not thus God, and the Son of God, and One with the Father in reſpect of the ſame Divine Nature with his Father.

It ſhall be my buſineſs at preſent to Prove this, after I have made a few General Remarks upon this paſſage, and theſe words of our Saviour.

The

The First of which ſhall be this, That the *Jews* underſtood our Saviour in this ſenſe; they ſuppoſed and concluded that he made himſelf God, by ſaying, *That he was One with the Father and the Son of God*; for this was all we know he ſaid: He did not ſay directly and expreſly that he was God, ſo far as appears by the account given by the Evangeliſt. And a great Man obſerves, Cardinal *Cuſa*, *Chriſtus Filium Dei ſe nominavit (& Deum Patrem) & non Deum, cum nominatio Dei ſit nominatio Patris Chriſti.* And an Eminent Proteſtant, *Flaccius Illyricus*, agrees with him, *In Novo Teſtamento plerumq; prima Perſona vocatur Deus, & plerumq; Paulus in ſuis Epiſtolis nomen Dei Patri tribuit.* But to be one with God, was to be underſtood to have one Nature with him; and to be the Son of God was to have this Divine Nature communicated to him from God the Father, and ſo to be God, or to *make himſelf God*, or aſſert and declare

Cardinal. Cuſa *in Cribrat. Alcoran.* lib. 1. cap. 11.

Flac. Illyric. *Clavis Scriptur. in verbo Deus.*

clare himſelf to be ſo in that ſenſe. Thus the *Jews* took our Saviours words, and thus underſtood him; and they probably had very great and particular Reaſon ſo to do from the Phraſes and Expreſſions then in uſe, and from ſome Learned Writings or Authors of Credit among them at that time, 'tis certain they immediately put this ſenſe upon them: And this was the Ground and Reaſon of their charge of Blaſphemy againſt Chriſt, that he made himſelf God by making himſelf one with the Father and the Son of God; and no doubt this was the true ſenſe and meaning and import of our Saviours words, according as they underſtood them, eſpecially.

2. Becauſe our Saviour did not deny this, nor any way diſown this ſenſe of them, nor ſay any thing to ſhow they were miſtaken in the ſenſe of his words, or to correct and undeceive them. Now he would certainly have done this both to have corrected their Error, and to have defended himſelf againſt their Charge, had it not been true, that he made himſelf God by thoſe words of his,

his, as they underſtood them. Had his words been to be taken in the ſenſe which our *Socinian* Adverſaries would now put upon them, That he was One with the Father only by Conſent and Agreement and not by Nature, and the Son of God only by Adoption and Favour, or upon the account of his extraordinary Human Birth, his Reſurrection from the Dead, his Mediatorial Office, and great Authority to which he was advanced after his Aſcenſion, though it had been a ſtrange Prolepſis to have called himſelf ſo then upon the three laſt accounts, and not as the True, Proper and Natural Son of God, our Saviours words had then given no ground or occaſion for ſuch a Charge as they laid againſt him, and he might eaſily have took it off, and vindicated himſelf by telling them, that they miſtook his words, and that he did not mean them in the ſenſe in which they falſly underſtood them; and this no doubt he would have done, had it been truly ſo, and had not their ſenſe of them been true and allowed by our Saviour. It would have been hardly

conſiſtent

conſiſtent with his Sincerity and Probity, his Integrity and Honeſty as a Man, if he had not been God too as he was the Son of God and One with the Father, to let the *Jews* underſtand his words in ſuch a wrong ſenſe, and lay ſuch a high Charge of Blaſphemy againſt him upon it, and not to ſay any thing to ſhow they were miſtaken, and to correct their Error, and to prevent their Sin, and to vindicate and defend himſelf; for otherwiſe it will look as if he had been willing to let their Miſtake paſs, though he knew it to be ſo, and to aſſume to himſelf the Vanity of being thought to be God, and by his words to make himſelf ſuch, tho' he had never ſaid it or thought it, but knew the contrary; which is an intolerable Reflection upon the meek and humble Jeſus; and not only upon the Truth of his Divinity, but even his Honeſty as a Man.

3. The Argument which our Saviour uſed to defend himſelf againſt their Charge. This does not invalidate (as our Adverſaries imagine) the truth of his being One with the Father by Nature

ture, and the proper Eternal Son of God: 'Tis this at the 34, 35, 36. Ver. *Jeſus anſwered them, Is it not written in your law, I have ſaid, ye are gods? If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the ſcripture cannot be broken: Say ye of him, whom the Father hath ſanctified, and ſent into the world, Thou blaſphemeſt; becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of God?* Theſe were called Gods in the ſtile of the *Jewiſh* Scriptures, and particularly *Pſal.* 82. 2. who were called by God to be his immediate Miniſters and Officers, as *Moſes* and other Magiſtrates; therefore whoever uſed that Name was not, according to them, to be charged preſently with Blaſphemy, much leſs he whom the Father hath ſanctified, choſen and appointed to the great Office of Meſſiah, and then ſent him into the World to execute it. Whether there be any force in what ſome obſerve (*a*) that the Father choſe him the Second Perſon of the Trinity rather than the

(a) *Quod alii ad humanam tantum Naturam reſtringunt ego extendo ad totam Chriſti Perſonam, nam ex tribus Perſonis in Cœlo hic unus fuit ſelectus ad hoc Officium Mediatoris.* Zanch. de trib. Eloh. p. 124.

the Third; and that there is alſo an Emphaſis in the words, *And ſent him into the world*, after he was firſt ſanctified and appointed by God the Father in Heaven, where he was before his Natural Begotten Son (*b*), and afterwards ſent into the World. This I ſhall not inſiſt on, but only allow that this was *Argumentum ad homines*, as we ſay, ſuch as Chriſt thought the fitteſt and propereſt to offer at that time to thoſe groſs, and ſtupid, and ignorant *Jewiſh* Accuſers, and that was indeed only *a minori ad majus*, whereby he deſigned only to wipe off the blackeſt and fouleſt parts of this Charge, but not to inform and inſtruct them ſo fully and perfectly in a Truth they could not bear, and were not prepared then to receive; however he would not deny, but did own and acknowledge their Charge of his making himſelf God, in their ſenſe: And if this be not proved from theſe words of his here, yet it is no way diſproved, any more than when he was asked, whither he were the Chriſt or Meſſiah,

(*b*) Maldonat. *in loc.*

his

his not anſwering directly proves that he was not; or his not inſtructing his Diſciples ſo fully about his Crucifixion or Reſurrection, proved he was not to Dye or to Riſe again. Neither the *Jews* nor the Diſciples themſelves could bear ſome Truths at firſt, nor the full opening the Myſtery of the Goſpel all at once; nor had Chriſt diſpatched all the work of his Life, nor was then willing to dye, or be ſtoned by them for a direct Charge of Blaſphemy. And therefore though he did not deny the Charge, which he would have done had it been falſe, yet he avoided it and defended himſelf againſt it, as far as his Infinite Wiſdom thought then prudent and convenient. But there are other places and other Arguments to prove Chriſts Divinity to us, his being one with the Father in Nature, and the Natural and Eternal Son of God; which I ſhall now produce, and then ſhow the uſefulneſs and neceſſity of this Doctrine.

I ſhall not produce all, but only ſelect ſome that are the moſt plain and conſiderable.

The

The Firſt ſhall be his Title and Character here given by himſelf; The Son of God, and his making God his Father, which is to be meant in a proper and moſt excellent and natural ſenſe, upon the account of his Divine and not his Humane Nature, or any thing belonging to that, as he was the Son of God antecedently to his being born of the Virgin, being begotten of the Father from all Eternity, and having his Divine Being from the Father, of the ſame Nature with himſelf. For tho' the Title of the Son of God is given to others in Scripture, and to Chriſt himſelf upon other accounts; as God calls the Children of *Iſrael* his Son, and his Firſt-born, *Exod.* 4. 22. as being in a ſtate of Favour and Covenant with him. And Chriſtians are thus more eſpecially the Adopted Sons, and the Children of God, in the Scripture ſtile. And Chriſt himſelf is called the Son of God upon ſeveral other accounts; as upon his Extraordinary Humane Birth and Conception by the Holy Ghoſt, *Luke* 1. 35. upon account of his Reſurrection, his being the Firſt-born

or First-begotten from the Dead; St. *Paul* applying to him the words of *David* in the second Psalm, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*; upon this very account, *Acts* 13. 33. and as afterwards upon his Ascension, he was made Heir of all things, πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως, *Col.* 1. 15. *The first-born and heir of the whole Creation.* But there is a higher Ground and Reason than all these of this great Character given to Christ in Scripture, the Son of God, namely, his Eternal Divine Generation, his being begotten of the Father in his own Likeness and Image, and having his Divine Nature communicated to him; for this is the first and most proper Notion of a Son, Another Person or Being, for *nulla res generat seipsam*, as St. *Austin* sayes, *de Trin. l.* 1. *c.* 1. produced or begotten in the same Nature and Likeness with its Father or Producent. That Christ was thus generated of the Father, and of the Substance of the Father, and not Created or Made, ἐξ οὐκ ὄντων, as the *Arrians* held, and that he was the Son of God, and God his Father, in this

proper

proper and excellent ſenſe, as the Chriſtian Church has alwayes declared and believed, ſo the Scripture bears witneſs to it in all thoſe places where it calls Chriſt God, and aſcribes the Divine Nature and Divine Perfections to him, as I ſhall ſhow it does, and ſayes he was in the beginning before the World, or from all Eternity with God; and that he was in the Form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God; *i. e.* as having the ſame Nature with him, which muſt be by that Communication of it which we call Generation; for he had not this from himſelf, or from none, but from another, who is therefore call'd his Father: But on this Head I inſiſt, only upon the propriety of thoſe phraſes, his being the Son of God, and God being his Father; which are to be underſtood in the proper, literal and natural meaning, as all perſons would underſtand them when ſpoken of a Humane Father and Son, and ſo they are to be taken when there is not a Connotation or a particular Reaſon expreſſed to denote an improper and Metaphorical

uſe of them : And there is one word frequently uſed in Scripture, which I think is a ſufficient proof of this, and that is when Chriſt is call'd not only the Son, but the only Son, and the only begotten Son of God, as *John* 1. 14. *John* 3. 16. 1 *John* 4. 9. μονογενὴς παρὰ πατρὸς, is a verbal ſignifying as much as μονὸς παρὰ πατρὸς γενηθεὶς, and Μονογενὴς, or *uni-genitus*, is one who has no partner or ſharer in that Sonſhip which is aſcribed to him ; but Chriſt, as an adopted Son, has many Brethren, and therefore it muſt be meant of that Divine Generation and Sonſhip which belongs to him alone ; and God by ſending his only begotten Son intended to expreſs his utmoſt Love to Mankind, and to that purpoſe St. *John* uſes the phraſe, *God ſo loved the world, that he ſent his only begotten Son* : But nothing raiſes this Love ſo high as his ſending his own Natural Son, a Perſon of the higheſt Dignity next to himſelf, and one of the ſame Divine Nature with himſelf, whereas if he were only an Adopted Son, or a Son upon the other accounts only, neither the Love of the Father,

Father, nor the Condeſcenſion of the Son would appear in ſuch Great Characters as the Scripture deſignedly ſets them out by.

I have inſiſted longer on this Title of Son, and only begotten Son, becauſe they are the only words in the Apoſtolick, and the oldeſt Creeds, to expreſs the belief of Chriſts Divinity, thereby deſigning to anſwer a great Objection of our Adverſaries. I ſhall be more brief on the reſt.

2. As Chriſt is called the Son of God, ſo he is called God alſo in Scripture in ſeveral places, *John* 1. 1. *The Word was with God, and the Word was God. My Lord and my God, John* 20. 28. *God bleſſed for ever, Rom.* 9. 5. And in others, eſpecially thoſe taken from the Old Teſtament, and applyed to Chriſt in the New. Now what can our Adverſaries ſay to this? Sometimes they ſay, The Word is not meant of Chriſt: But that is ſo undeniable in ſome places that they cannot but own it: And therefore they ſay, Chriſt, though having only the Humane and

not the Divine Nature is called God in a certain ſenſe, *viz.* by Office as *Moſes* and other Magiſtrates, who were the Miniſters, and Deputies, and Embaſſadors of God, and upon that account have that Name ſometimes attributed to them; and Chriſt by having that extraordinary Office of Meſſiah, and that extraordinary Power over all things committed to him as Mediator, after his Aſcenſion, is upon this account they ſay, God, and may be called God, and the True God, and the moſt High God, as *Socinus*, *Stichlingius*, *Smalcius*, *Ruarus*, and others of them ſpeak, but ſtill they deny that Chriſt is God by Nature, or that he has the True Divine Nature, the ſame with the Father, belonging to him, but only as a Man he is made and exalted to be a God by being advanced to an extraordinary Power and Authority over all other Creatures, but this leaves him ſtill in the rank and order of Creatures; nay, makes him a God of a meer Man, a Late not an Eternal God, One who had no Being before he was Born of the Virgin, and no Divi-

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nity till after his Reſurrection and his Aſcenſion into Heaven; ſo that they may date his ἀποθέωσις, and know exactly how many Years and Dayes he has been God in their Ridiculous, Blaſphemous and Heatheniſh Senſe of the word *God*: But God is an Eternal, Infinite, All-perfect Being, *who was, and is, and is to come*, whoſe Exiſtence is Neceſſary and not Contingent, Eternal and not of Yeſterday, who has the True Divine Eſſence and Nature, and the Incommunicable Excellencies and Perfections belonging to it. And in this ſenſe Chriſt is God and True God, and God by Nature, as I ſhall prove evidently from Scripture. He is not indeed God the Father, or God from none; Ἀυτοθεὸς, ἀυτογενὴς, Ἀυτὸν, ἀγέννητος, ἀυτοῦσιος, in that ſenſe we believe in One God the Father Almighty, and to us there is but One God the Father, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, 1 *Cor.* 8. 6. and Chriſt is the Son of this God the Father, who had his Being and Nature from him, but he is God of God, very God of very God, as the *Nicene* Creed expreſſes it, has the Divine Nature and

Divine Perfections Naturally belonging to him, and in that Senſe is true God. This I ſhall prove further.

3. From his being joyned with the Father in the Baptiſmal Office, and in the Chriſtian Form of Benediction, as we have them, *Mat.* 28 19. 1 *Cor.* 13. 14. Now can we think that Chriſt and the Holy Ghoſt would be joyned together in both thoſe with the Father, if they were only Creatures though of the higheſt Dignity and Quality, and were not truly God and of the ſame Nature Honour and Dignity with the Father. We may as well and much better ſuppoſe that a Charter of Priviledges ſhould be Granted in the name of the King and of two of his greateſt Subjects, or Homage Sworn to them and to the King both together, and that they ſhould be joyned in the ſame Royal and Sovereign Acts of Favour, and have the ſame acknowledgements and Oaths of Fidelity made to them, as that God the Father ſhould be joyned with two mere Creatures in ſuch Solemn Religious acts of Chriſtianity; Baptiſm is the Higheſt and moſt

moſt Solemn Devoting, and Dedicating our Selves to God, and profeſſing the ChriſtianFaith by the ſpecial and diſtinguiſhing Characters of it, as containing the Belief of Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; which are the Fundamental γνωρίσματα of Chriſtianity, as diſtinct from natural and *Jewiſh* Religion: Now to do this to Creatures, or in the name of Creatures as well as God, would be a ſtrange anomally and unaccountable abſurdity. The *Jews* indeed were Baptized into *Moſes* in the Cloud, and in the Sea, 1 *Cor.* 20. 2. as our Adverſaries often remind us; but this was only Myſtically and Figuratively and almoſt into the Religion delivered by *Moſes*; they were not Devoted to *Moſes*, but to the God of *Iſrael*, nor were Baptized in the name of the God of *Iſrael* and of *Moſes* joyned together, as Chriſtians are in the name of Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; nor was there ever any Benediction given in the name of *Moſes*, or of *Abraham*, and the like, but only in the name of God, the God of *Iſrael*; who would not give his Glory to another, nor allow any Creatures to be

be his Rivals, or ſhare with him in the moſt Religious Acts of Homage and Fealty, and in the incommunicable rights tenders and acknowledgments of Divine Honour payed to Him, or in the Grants and Donations of ſpecial Favour that flowed and iſſued from himſelf alone. So that I take this Form of Chriſtian Baptiſm, and Chriſtian Bleſſing to be a very ſtrong Evidence to all but perverſe Unbelievers of the Divinity, both of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, who are thus joyned with the Father in very ſhort and ſolemn Forms, as of equal Honour, Power and Dignity with him, to whom Chriſtians are alike to Devote themſelves, and to expect like Bleſſings and Favours from all of them.

4. The Divinity of Chriſt is fully proved and Demonſtrated from ſuch Divine Acts, and operations, ſuch Divine Excellencies, Attributes and Perfections as belong only to God and the Divine Nature, and which are expreſly aſcribed to Chriſt in the Holy Scriptures, as to Create and make the World to be Omnipotent, Omnipreſent,

preſent, Omniſcient, Eternal, and the like: The Notion we have of a God, is a being endued with theſe Infinite Perfections, which cannot belong to a Finite and Limited Creature however excellent, unleſs we confound the Idæa's of Finite and Infinite of God and a Creature, and bring the one down ſo low, or raiſe the other ſo high as to make no difference between them. Theſe are the proper Attributes, Properties and Excellencies of the Divine Nature; and he that hath theſe muſt have the Divine Nature, from whence they Reſult, and to which they peculiarly belong. Now that Chriſt is Omnipotent, appears from his making the World; for nothing but Almighty Power could do that, and produce all Things out of nothing, which is what we mean by Creation: Now the Scripture is poſitive that *all things were made by him; and that without him was not any thing made that was made,* Joh. 1. 3. *For by him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, viſible and inviſible,--all things were created by him, and for him.* Coloſ. 1. 16.

1.16. and by him God made the World, *Heb.* 1. 2. To ſay all this is meant of a Spiritual Creation, or of Chriſts making a new Goſpel World, and not a Natural, is ſuch an unnatural and ridiculous force and violence to the Words, as not only Confutes, but Expoſes it ſelf, and makes the plaineſt words in Scripture, even thoſe that deſcribe the Creation in *Geneſis*, and Chriſts Birth in St. *Matthew*, and the whole Scripture Hiſtory to be liable to be rarefied away by a ſtrained and forced Allegory. If Chriſt then Created all Things, He is certainly God, for he that Built or Made all Things is God according to the *Apoſtles* Argument, *Heb.* 3. 4. And if his Creating the World doth not prove him to be truly God, then we cannot prove a God from the Creation, and that undoubted Argument for the proof of a God muſt be given up, which the Atheiſts will very much thank the *Arrians* for.

That Chriſt is Omnipreſent appears by his Promiſe to his Diſciples, *Mat.* 18. 25. that where two or three of them were gathered together in any part of

of the World, there he was in the midſt of them. That he is Omniſcient is teſtified by *St.* Peter, *Lord thou knoweſt all things*, Joh. 21. 17. and that he knoweth the hearts of all Men, and will judge all Men at the laſt Day. That He is Eternal and was not only before *Abraham*, but in the beginning before the World, which is a *Jewiſh* Phraſe for Eternity, is plain alſo from Scripture, notwithſtanding all the little Cavils of our Adverſaries: If Chriſt then be the Omnipotent Maker of the World, who upholdeth all things by the Word of his Power, by whom all Things ſubſiſt, who is an Omnipreſent, Omniſcient and Eternal Being, He is a God by Nature of whom we cannot have a higher Idæa and Conception, only that He is not from himſelf or from none, which belongs only to the Father from whom he received his Being, and all the Perfections of it.

5. The Divinity of Chriſt appears from our Praying to him and Worſhipping him, our invoking and Adoring him as we are Commanded to do in Scripture, and as has bin Obſerved by the

the Christian Church in all Ages. For nothing is an Object of Divine Worship but God; or a Being that has the Divine Nature and Perfections, *Thou shalt Worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve*, is a standing Rule both of the *Jewish* and Christian Religion, *Deut.* 6. 13. *Mat.* 4. 10. and of Natural too; for the Glorious and Infinite Excellencies of the Divine Nature, which cannot be Communicated to a Creature, and wherever they are Communicated Constitute that Being a God; these are the Ground of that Peculiar and Incommunicable Honour which we give to God, and the Infinite distance between God and Created Beings, who however Excellent, yet are Infinitely below the supream and transcendent Excellencies of the Divine Nature makes Creatures uncapable of Divine Worship, and makes it always unlawful in us, and a robbing God of his Glory to give it them. The *Arrians* therefore were alwayes accused by the Orthodox of Idolatry for Worshipping Christ, and believing him to be a Creature, though of the higheſt Order

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that could be : And when *Socinus* had perſwaded his Diſciples to Diſ-believe Chriſts Divinity, *Davidis*, and ſeveral of them rightly concluded that then he was not to be Worſhipped; and our late Sophiſters ſeem inclined to agree with them in this, finding it impoſſible to avoid the ſame Charge in Worſhipping Chriſt as a Man, though never ſo exalted, that lyes againſt the Church of *Rome* for Worſhipping Saints and Angels, and the Virgin *Mary*; and that they can no way come off, but by the ſame diſtinctions of λατρεία and δουλεία Sovereign and Inferior Worſhip, which are equal, but very weak Pleas to Defend *Popery*, *Paganiſm* and *Socinianiſm*. But how bold and raſh an Aſſertion is it on the other ſide, to deny that Chriſt is to be Worſhipped, when all the Angels are Commanded to Worſhip him, *Heb.* 1. 6. and when all Men are to Honour the Son, even as they Honour the Father, *Joh.* 5. 20. and he that doth not thus Honour the Son, Honoureth not the Father that ſent him. No pious and good Chriſtians, who own Chriſt to

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be their Saviour will ever be brought off from worſhipping and praying to him, and calling upon his name as the firſt Chriſtians did, *Acts* 9. 14, 21. and St. *Stephen*, *Acts* 7. 59. and St. *Paul*, *Acts* 12. 8. and the whole Chriſtian Church afterwards. *Socinus* was ſo ſenſible of this that he ſet himſelf moſt zealouſly to defend and aſſert both the Lawfulneſs and Neceſſity of it, though many of his Followers have been againſt both. But this is ſuch a weight upon *Socinianiſm* as will help to ſink it. It can never free it ſelf from one of thoſe ſtreights that will ruine and deſtroy it, Either to throw off wholly the worſhip of Chriſt, which is to throw off Chriſtianity, and which will never be born by any number of Pious Chriſtians, or to own that Idolatrous Principle, That a Creature may be worſhip'd, which will never be admitted by Proteſtants. They who will not worſhip and pray to Chriſt ceaſe to be Chriſtians; and they who do pray to him, muſt own him to be Omnipreſent, Omniſcient and Almighty, to be able to grant their Requeſts, to know

know their Hearts, and to hear their Prayers, and be preſent with them in all places, and ſo to have thoſe Divine Attributes and Perfections that belong only to God.

6. And Laſtly, I might prove the Divinity of Chriſt from the Univerſal Conſent and Belief of the Chriſtian Church, and from the Teſtimony of the greateſt Adverſaries to Chriſtianity, who alwayes ſuppoſed and charged this as the Sentiment of Chriſtians, that they held Chriſt to be God. The Conſent and Belief of the Chriſtian Church is evident from its Creeds, and its Prayers, its Doctrine and its Practice in worſhipping Chriſt, and from its Zeal againſt all thoſe early Hereticks that oppoſed this Doctrine and its determinations both in Private Synods and General Councils for the maintaining and aſſerting it. It muſt be very ſtrange that the whole Chriſtian Church ſhould be miſtaken in a matter of this Importance, and ſhould have all along a Falſe Object of Worſhip, and when it was ſo zealous a-

gainſt all Idolatry, and had ſo many Martyrs upon that ſcore, that it ſhould bring in the ſame another way, and worſhip a meer Creature. It muſt be very arrogant in our Adverſaries to oppoſe themſelves to the Belief of the whole Primitive Church, and to diſagree with all thoſe Holy Men and Learned Writers whom we call the Fathers, who have tranſmitted Chriſtianity and this Doctrine down to us; and this *Socinus* even frankly and openly owns, *Patres omnes ab ipſis diſſentire*, in his Anſwer to *Wiekus*, (*Tom. 2. Reſp. ad 2 Cap.* Wieki *Claſ. 7. c. 9. p. 618.*) and ſayes, *Hac authoritatum & teſtimoniorum ex Patribus & Conciliis congeries, nullas vires habet, præſertim adverſus nos, qui ab iſtis Patribus & Conciliis, quæ extant nos diſſentire non diffitemur.* This was ſaid with great freedom but greater inſolence, his followers have had more cunning and leſs Honeſty than to own this. It is not proper at this time and place to prove what their Maſter owns, and to prove the Divinity of Chriſt from the Antient Church, and from the univerſal

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ſuffrage of its Writers in all Ages, that has been done beyond all poſſibility of an Anſwer from the boldeſt Pretender. But our very Enemies have all along bore witneſs to this Truth, that the Chriſtians believed and worſhipped Chriſt as a God; ſo ſayes *Pliny* in his Letter to *Trajan*, that the Chriſtians met and ſang a Hymn to Chriſt as to God; and *Celſus* charges the Chriſtians with worſhiping Chriſt as a new God; and *Julian* writ to this purpoſe to *Photinus*, agreeing with him that Chriſt was but a Man againſt the Churches Doctrine of a *Galilean* God, as he blaſphemouſly ſpeaks; ſo *Lucian* in his *Philopatris* expoſes the ὑὸν πατρὸς and πνεῦμα ἅγιον, as the God of Chriſtians; and *Mahomet* all along through his *Alcoron*, finds fault with the Chriſtians for believing and worſhipping Chriſt as God, whom he owns to be a Prophet, and a great Man ſent of God, as well as *Socinus*. The Chriſtians would have diſowned this charge had it not been true, eſpecially when in the hands of their Enemies and under Perſecution for it, when they might have eſcaped

Death, and the greateſt Tortures and Sufferings had they been *Socinians*, and denyed Chriſts Divinity. They had none of their ſubtle diſtinctions of a God by Nature and a God by Office to help them out, but they believed Chriſt to be as true a God by Nature as he was a Man; and they took God in the true and plain ſenſe for a Divine Almighty Being, who was to be worſhip'd by them, and that Chriſt was ſuch an one as well as a Man. This was the Doctrine they were taught by the Church, and by the Scriptures, and that all Chriſtians believed, till the Subtleties of *Arrius*, *Eunomius*, *Artius*, and others, and the greater Subtleties of the School-men afterwards in making One to be Three and Three One, and the as great Subtleties of the *Socinians* in oppoſing them darkened, and obſcured the plain Chriſtian Doctrine, which we are Baptized into, of Father, Son and Holy Ghoſt; and that the Son who was born of the Virgin, and dyed for us, and roſe again, and was Chriſt the Saviour of Mankind, that he was alſo the Son of God, and

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the only begotten of God the Father, who had the ſame Divine Nature with him, and ſo was God, and to be worſhip'd and pray'd to. The Uſefulneſs and Neceſſity of which Doctrine I ſhould come now to ſhow had I time. In a word, I take all Chriſtian Faith, and Hope, and Worſhip to depend upon it, and even Chriſtianity it ſelf as it is a diſtinct Religion from Natural, and as it obliges us to ſuch peculiar Articles of Faith as well as to ſuch common Rules of Morality. If Chriſt be not God, and have not the Divine Nature belonging to him, but be only a Man, as he is not to be worſhip'd, as I have ſhown, ſo how we truſt and hope and believe in him for Salvation, and put ſuch a full confidence in a Creature that it would not be greater if he were a God. A poor finite Creature, like our ſelves, is not a fit object of our hope and truſt for ſo great a matter as an Infinite Divine Being, who has all Power and all Goodneſs. The great God may exalt, if he pleaſes, any of us, or any other Man, to as much Power and Dignity, as the *Socinians* ſay

ſay he has done Chriſt, and they may have been made their own Saviours, or Saviours to all the World, in the *Socinian* Notion, as well as he; but ſurely none but a God, no Man or Creature could be the Redeemer and the Saviour of Mankind. Our Redemption is a greater Work than our Creation, and the Lord that bought us deſerves as great Thanks and Gratitude, Praiſe, Honour and Acknowledgment from us, as he that Made us; and therefore we ſhould neceſſarily run into Idolatry, if he were not God alſo. Could this great and Myſterious Work have been accompliſhed any other way than by the Son of God, a God Incarnate and made Fleſh, the Divine Wiſdom which does nothing in vain would in all likelyhood have found out an eaſier and a cheaper Method, and not have been at the expence of ſuch a Miraculous, ſuch an Extraordinary, ſuch a Myſterious way, as Men and Angels are aſtoniſht at when they look into the mighty depth and profound greatneſs of it. God the Father ſhewed his utmoſt Love to Mankind, and exhauſted

the Riches of his Mercy to Sinners, in ſending his Son, his only begotten Son into the World to ſave us, and his Son ſhowed the greateſt Condeſcenſion and utmoſt Humiliation and emptying of himſelf, thus to come into the World and become a Man; but had he been only a Man where had the Myſtery of this been? This great Love of the Father, and this Condeſcenſion of the Son, on both which the Scripture layes ſuch a particular weight and Emphaſis, had been loſt and ſunk and dwindled into very little, and had all its mighty Figures and Characters, in which it is repreſented in Scripture, abated, leſſened and diminiſht, if Chriſt had been only a Creature and a meer Man, and had not been truly and properly the Son of God, begotten of him from all Eternity as well as of the Virgin afterwards, and One with the Father in reſpect of his Divine Nature and Original.

To him, God bleſſed for ever, be all Honour and Worſhip, Praiſe, Glory and Thankſgiving, now and for evermore. Amen.

F I N I S.